



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

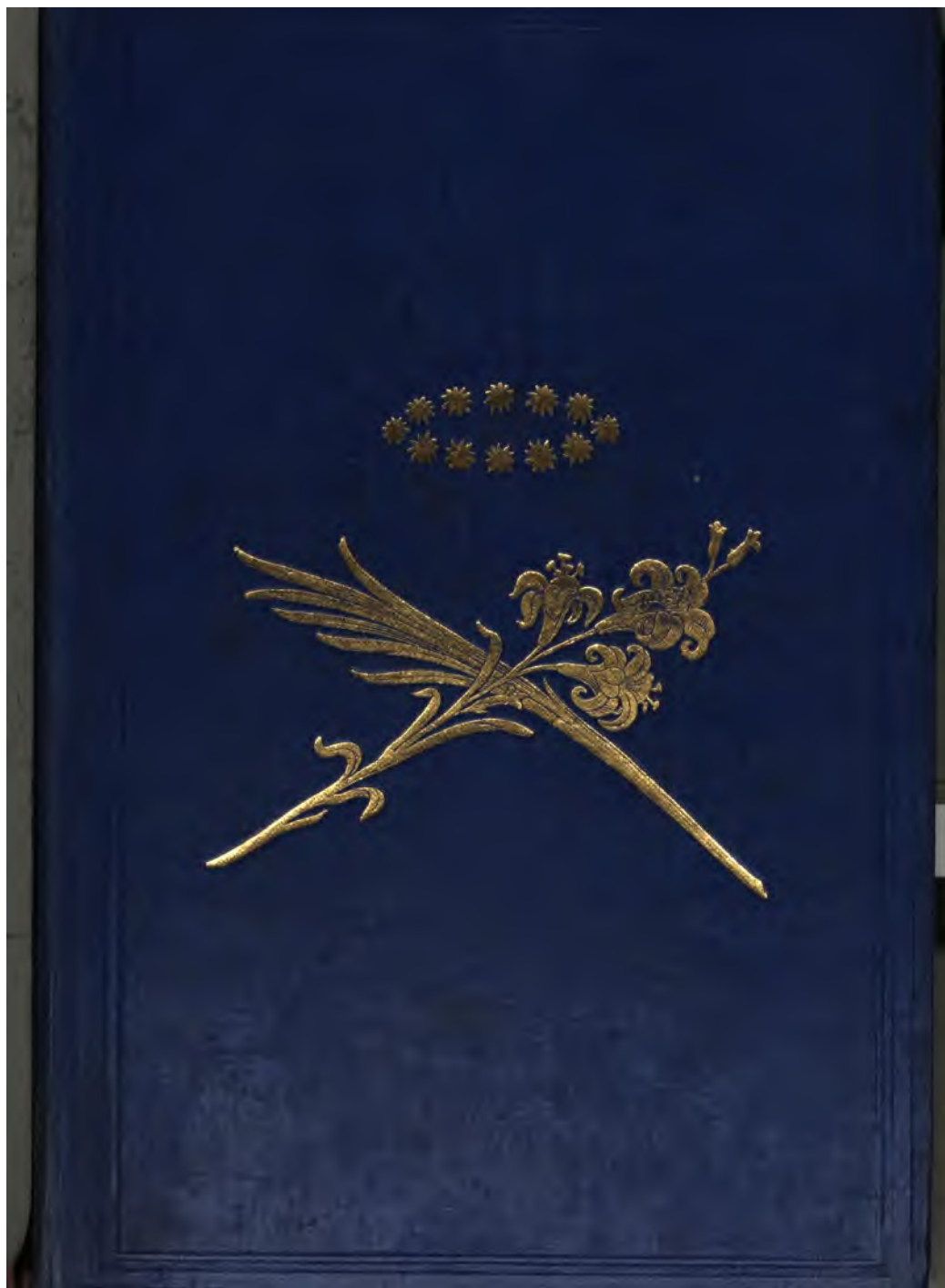
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600082395X



14

15

16

A Chaplet of Verses.

By ADELAIDE A. PROCTER.



LONDON :
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, & ROBERTS.

280. b. 40.



A CHAPLET OF VERSES.

BY

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER,

Author of "Legends and Lyrics."

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD DOYLE.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON :
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, & ROBERTS.
1862.

280. b. 40.





THERE is scarcely any charitable institution which should excite such universal, such unhesitating sympathy as a Night Refuge for the Homeless Poor.

A shelter through the bleak winter nights, leave to rest in some poor shed instead of wandering through the pitiless streets, is a boon we could hardly deny to a starving dog. And yet we have all known that in this country, in this town, many of our miserable fellow-creatures were pacing the streets through the long weary nights, without a roof to shelter them, without food to eat, with their poor rags soaked in rain, and only the bitter winds of Heaven for companions; women and children utterly forlorn and helpless, either wandering about all night, or crouching under a miserable archway, or, worst of all, seeking in death or sin the refuge denied them elsewhere. It is a marvel that we

4

could sleep in peace in our warm comfortable homes with this horror at our very door.

But at last some efforts were made to efface this stain upon our country, public sympathy was appealed to, and a few 'Refuges' were opened, to shelter our homeless poor through the winter nights.

In the Autumn of 1860 there was no Catholic Refuge in the kingdom; and excellent as were the Protestant Refuges, their resources were quite inadequate to meet the claims upon them.

In this country, as we all know, the very poorest and most destitute are in many cases Catholics; and doubtless our Priests, to whom no form of sin or sorrow is strange, must see in a special manner, and in innumerable results, the sufferings, dangers, and temptations of the homeless. The Rev. Dr. Gilbert therefore resolved to open a Catholic Night Refuge in his parish, and to his zealous charity and unwearied efforts are due the foundation and success of the PROVIDENCE ROW NIGHT REFUGE FOR HOMELESS WOMEN AND CHILDREN; the first Catholic Refuge in England or Ireland, and still the only one in England.

The Sisters of Mercy had long been aiding their pastors in the schools of the parish, and when this new opening for their charity was suggested to them, they unhesitatingly accepted a task, worthy indeed of the holy name they bear. They were seeking for some house more suitable for a Convent than the one they had hitherto occupied in Broad Street; and when Dr. Gilbert saw the large stable at the back of 14, Finsbury Square, he felt that here was a suitable place for his long-cherished plan of a Night Refuge. It was separated from the house by a yard, and opened on a narrow street at the back, already called, with a happy appropriateness, Providence Row. To Finsbury Square therefore the community removed, and it was not long before the stable was fitted up with wooden beds and benches, the few preparations were completed, and on the 7th of October, 1860, the Refuge was opened. At first there were but fourteen beds, but contributions flowed in from Protestants as well as Catholics, and in February, 1861, thirty-one more beds were added, making in all forty-five. But as many of the poor women have children with them,

rarely less than sixty persons are each night admitted. Up to the present time, fourteen thousand seven hundred and eighty-five nights' lodgings have been given, with the same number of suppers and breakfasts.

From six to eight are the hours of admission; but this is indeed a needless rule, for a crowd of ragged women, with pale, weary children clinging to them, are waiting patiently long before the doors are opened, and the place is filled at once.

Means for washing are given them, they rest themselves in warmth, light, and peace, and at eight o'clock each person receives half a pound of bread and a large basin of excellent gruel. Night prayers are said by one of the Sisters, and then the poor wanderers lie down in their rude but clean and comfortable beds. They have the same meal in the morning.

Those who come on Saturday evening remain till Monday, receiving on Sunday, besides the usual breakfast and supper, an extra half-pound of bread, and a good supply of meat soup. There is no distinction of creed; Protestants and Catholics are alike admitted. There are but

two conditions of admittance—that the applicants be homeless and of good character. This is the only Refuge which makes character a condition; and it is found that, in spite of all precautions, much harm arises in the other Refuges to the young and innocent, from the bad language and evil example of the degraded class with whom they are brought in contact.

Each evening (and on Sundays more fully) simple instructions on the Catechism are given by one of the Sisters; but this the Protestants do not attend; they frequently ask leave to be present, but it is not permitted, (without the special permission of one of the clergy,) as the instructions on the practice of our faith would be to them comparatively useless and unmeaning.

The temporary shelter and food which is given in Providence Row, is not the only, perhaps often not the greatest, benefit bestowed upon the poor forlorn inmates. They find advice, sympathy, and help from the kind Sisters; and the very telling their troubles to one who is there to serve and tend them, not for any earthly reward, but from Christian love and pity, must be a rest to their weary hearts, a comfort in

their sore want and distress. It is touching to see their eager desire to be allowed to help the Sister in the cleaning, cooking, &c., and the half ashamed thankfulness with which they watch her busied in their service.

One of the Nuns sleeps every night in the refuge, and no unruly sound, no whisper of murmur or disrespect, ever rises against her gentle sway. Nay, even more, when she has the sad task of selecting among the waiting crowd the number who may enter, choosing generally those with children and those who have not applied before, the rest submit without a murmur. Though the little ones are hardly counted, but creep in by their mothers' sides, there are still many—sometimes thirty or forty nightly—turned away for want of space. They have had a glimpse of warmth and light, and then it is the cruel office of the kind Nun to bar the door against them; but no angry word, no remonstrance, meets her sorrowful refusal; they turn once more to their weary wanderings in the dark bleak streets. And so will many have to do, night after night, until the Refuge is enlarged. The present space will hold no more beds, but

to build an additional dormitory is the earnest desire and intention of Dr. Gilbert.

No salaries are received by any who have charge of the Refuge. Among the many causes for gratitude we have to our good Religious, surely it is not one of the least that what we can spare in the cause of charity goes solely and directly to its object; the more difficult and more perfect share of the good work being taken by them out of love to God and His poor.

The Refuge is open from the month of October to April.

It is placed under the special patronage of our Blessed Lady, and Blessed Benedict Labré.

May the Mother who wandered homeless through inhospitable Bethlehem, and the Saint who was a beggar and an outcast upon the face of the earth, watch over this Refuge for the poor and desolate, and obtain from the charity of the faithful the aid which it so sorely needs.

I may add, that donations for the Refuge will be thankfully received by the Rev. Dr. Gilbert, 22, Finsbury Circus, or by the Rev. Mother, at the Convent, 14, Finsbury Square, E.C.

We all meditate long and often on the many

kinds of sufferings borne for us by our Blessed Redeemer; but perhaps, if we consider a moment, we shall most of us confess, that the one we think of least often, the one we compassionate least of all, is the only one of which He deigned to tell us Himself, and for which He Himself appealed to our pity in the Divine complaint, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man *has not where to lay his head.*"

A. A. P.

May, 1862.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE ARMY OF THE LORD	1
THE STAR OF THE SEA	8
THE SACRED HEART	10
THE NAMES OF OUR LADY	14
A CHAPLET OF FLOWERS	18
KYRIE ELEISON	23
THE ANNUNCIATION	26
AN APPEAL	29
THE JUBILEE OF 1850	33
CHRISTMAS FLOWERS	36
A DESIRE	40
OUR DAILY BREAD	43
THREEFOLD	45
CONFIDO ET CONQUIESCO	47
ORA PRO ME	49

	PAGE
THE CHURCH IN 1849	51
FISHERS OF MEN	52
THE OLD YEAR'S BLESSING	54
EVENING CHANT	57
A CHRISTMAS CAROL	59
OUR TITLES	62
MINISTERING ANGELS	64
THE SHRINES OF MARY	66
THE HOMELESS POOR	75
MILLY'S EXPIATION	84
A CASTLE IN THE AIR	104
PER PACEM AD LUCEM	106
A LEGEND	108
BIRTHDAY GIFTS	110
A BEGGAR	120
LINKS WITH HEAVEN	122
HOMELESS	125

* * * *Some of these poems were written twenty years ago: but only three of them have been previously published.*



A Chapter of Verses.



THE ARMY OF THE LORD.

I.

To fight the battle of the Cross, Christ's chosen ones
are sent—

Good soldiers and great victors—a noble armament.
They use no earthly weapon, they know not spear or
sword,

Yet right and true, and valiant, is the army of the
Lord.

B

II.

Fear them, ye mighty ones of earth ; fear them, ye
demon foes ;
Slay them and think to conquer, but the ranks will
always close :
In vain do Earth and Hell unite their power and skill
to try,
They fight better for their wounds, and they con-
quer when they die.

III.

The soul of every sinner is the victory they would
gain ;
They would bind each rebel heart in their Master's
golden chain :
Faith is the shield they carry, and the two-edged
sword they bear
Is God's strongest, mightiest weapon, and they call it
Love and Prayer.

IV.

Where the savage hordes are dwelling by the Ganges'
sacred tide,
Through the trackless Indian forests, St. Francis is
their guide ;

The Army of the Lord.

3

Where crime and sin are raging, to conquer they are
gone ;—
They do conquer as they go, for St. Philip leads
them on.

V.

They are come where all are kneeling at the shrines
of wealth and pride,
And an old and martyr'd Bishop is their comrade and
their guide :
To tell the toil-worn negro of freedom and repose,
O'er the vast Atlantic's bosom they are called by
sweet St. Rose.

VI.

They are gone where Love is frozen and Faith grown
calm and cold,
Where the world is all triumphant, and the sheep
have left the fold,
Where His children scorn His blessings, and His
sacred Shrines despise,—
And the beacon of the warriors is the light in
Mary's eyes.

VII.

The bugle for their battle is the matin bell for prayer ;
And for their noble standard Christ's holy Cross they
bear ;
His sacred name their war-cry—'tis in vain what ye
can do,
They *must* conquer, for your Angels are leaguering
with them too.

VIII.

Would you know, Oh World, these warriors ? Go
where the poor, the old,
Ask for pardon and for heaven, and you offer food
and gold ;
With healing and with comfort, with words of peace
and prayer,
Bearing His greatest gift to man—Christ's chosen
priests are there.

IX.

Where sin and crime are dwelling, hid from the light
of day,
And life and hope are fading at Death's cold touch
away,

Where dying eyes, in horror see the long-forgotten
past,
Christ's servants claim the sinner and gain his soul
at last.

X.

Where the rich and proud and mighty God's
message would defy,
In warning and reproof His anointed ones stand by :
Bright are the crowns of glory God keepeth for His
own,
Their life one sigh for Heaven, and their aim His
will alone.

XI.

And see sweet Mercy's sister, where the poor and
wretched dwell,
In gentle accents telling of Him she loves so well ;
Training young hearts to serve their Lord, and
place their hope in Heaven,
Bidding her erring sisters love much and be forgiven.

XII.

And where in cloistered silence dim the Brides of
Jesus dwell,
Where purest incense rises up from every lowly cell.

They plead not vainly,—they have chosen and gained
the better part,
And given their gentle life away to Him who has
their heart.

XIII.

And some there are among us—the path which they
have trod
Of sin and pain and anguish has led at last to God :
They plead, and Christ will hear them, that the poor
slaves who pine
In the bleak dungeon they have left, may see His
truth divine.

XIV.

Oh ! who can tell how many hearts are altars to His
praise,
From which the silent prayer ascends through patient
nights and days :
The sacrifice is offered still in secret and alone,
Oh ! world, ye do not know them, but He can help
His own.

XV.

They are with us, His true soldiers, they come in
power and might,
Glorious the crown which they shall gain after the
heavenly fight;
And you, perchance, who scoff, may yet their rest
and glory share,
As the rich spoil of their battle and the captives of
their prayer.

XVI.

Oh! who shall tell the wonder of that great day of
rest,
When even in this place of strife His soldiers are so
blest:
Oh World, oh Earth, why strive ye? join the low
chant they sing—
“ Oh Grave, where is thy victory! Oh Death, where
is thy sting !”

THE STAR OF THE SEA.

How many a mighty ship
 The stormy waves o'erwhelm ;
 Yet our frail bark floats on,
 Our Angel holds the helm :
 Dark storms are gathering round,
 And dangerous winds arise,
 Yet see ! one trembling star
 Is shining in the skies ;—
 And we are safe who trust in thee,
 Star of the Sea.

A long and weary voyage
 Have we to reach our home,
 And dark and sunken rocks
 Are hid in silver foam ;
 Each moment we may sink,
 But steadily we sail,
 Our wingèd Pilot smiles,
 And says we shall not fail :—
 And so we kneel and call on thee,
 Star of the Sea.

The Star of the Sea.

9

Yes, for those shining rays
Shall beam upon the main,
Shall guide us safely on,
Through fear and doubt and pain :
And see—the stormy wind
Our little sail has caught,
The tempest others fear
Shall drive us into port :—
Through Life's dark voyage we trust in thee,
Star of the Sea.

The shore now looms in sight,
The far off golden strand,
Yet many a freight is wrecked
And lost in sight of land ;
Then guide us safely home,
Through that last hour of strife,
And welcome us to land,
From the long voyage of life :—
In death and life we call on thee,
Star of the Sea.

THE SACRED HEART.

WHAT wouldst thou have, Oh soul,
Thou weary soul?
Lo! I have sought for rest
On the Earth's heaving breast,
From pole to pole.
Sleep—I have been with her,
But she gave dreams;
Death—nay, the rest he gives
Rest only seems.
Fair nature knows it not—
The grass is growing;
The blue air knows it not—
The winds are blowing:
Not in the changing sky,
The stormy sea—
Yet somewhere in God's wide world
Rest there must be.
Within thy Saviour's Heart
Place all thy care,
And learn, Oh weary soul,
Thy Rest is there.

What wouldst thou, trembling soul?

Strength for the strife—

Strength for this fiery war

That we call Life.

Fears gather thickly round;

Shadowy foes,

Like unto armed men,

Around me close.

What am I, frail and poor,

When griefs arise?

No help from the weak earth,

Or the cold skies.

Lo! I can find no guards,

No weapons borrow,

Shrinking, alone I stand,

With mighty sorrow.

Courage, thou trembling soul,

Grief thou must bear,

Yet thou canst find a strength

Will match despair:

Within thy Saviour's Heart—

Seek for it there.

What wouldst thou have, sad soul,

Oppressed with grief?—

Comfort: I seek in vain,

Nor find relief.

Nature, all pitiless,
Smiles on my pain ;
I ask my fellow-men,
They give disdain.
I asked the babbling streams,
But they flowed on ;
I asked the wise and good,
But they gave none.
Though I have asked the stars,
Coldly they shine,
They are too bright to know
Grief such as mine.
I asked for comfort still,
And I found tears,
And I have sought in vain
Long, weary years.
Listen, thou mournful soul,
Thy pain shall cease ;
Deep in His sacred Heart,
Dwells joy and peace.

Yes, in that Heart divine,
The Angels bright
Find, through eternal years,
Still new delight.

From thence his constancy
The martyr drew,
And there the virgin band
Their refuge knew.
There, racked by pain without,
And dread within,
How many souls have found
Heaven's bliss begin.
Then leave thy vain attempts
To seek for peace ;
The world can never give
One soul release :
But in thy Saviour's Heart
Securely dwell,
No pain can harm thee, hid
In that sweet cell.
Then fly, Oh coward soul,
Delay no more,
What words can speak the joy
For thee in store ?
What smiles of earth can tell
Of peace like thine ?
Silence and tears are best
For things divine.

Health of the Sick : when anxious hearts
Watch by the sufferer's bed,
On this sweet name of thine they lean,
Consoled and comforted.

Mother of Sorrows : many a heart
Half-broken by despair,
Has laid its burthen by the cross,
And found a mother there.

Queen of all Saints : the Church appeals
For her loved dead to thee ;
She knows they wait in patient pain,
A bright eternity.

Fair Queen of Virgins : thy pure band,
The lilies round thy throne,
Love the dear title which they bear
Most that it is thine own.

True Queen of Martyrs : if we shrink
From want, or pain, or woe,
We think of the sharp sword that pierced
Thy heart, and call thee so.

Mary: the dearest name of all,
The holiest and the best ;
The first low word that Jesus lisped
Laid on His mother's breast.

Mary, the name that Gabriel spoke,
The name that conquers hell ;
Mary, the name that through high heaven,
The angels love so well.

Mary—our comfort and our hope,
Oh may that word be given
To be the last we sigh on earth—
The first we breathe in heaven.

A CHAPLET OF FLOWERS.

DEAR, set the casement open,
The evening breezes blow
Sweet perfumes from the flowers
I cannot see below.

I can but catch the waving
Of chestnut boughs that pass,
Their shadow must have covered
The sun-dial on the grass.

So go and bring the flowers
I love best to my room,
My failing strength no longer
Can bear me where they bloom.

You know I used to love them,
But ah ! they come too late—
For see, my hands are trembling
Beneath their dewy weight.

So I will watch you weaving
A chaplet for me, dear,
Of all my favourite flowers,
As I could do last year.

First, take those crimson roses—
How red their petals glow!
Red as the blood of Jesus,
Which heals our sin and woe.

See in each heart of crimson
A deeper crimson shine—
So, in the foldings of our hearts,
Should glow a love divine.

Next place those tender violets,
Look how they still regret
The cell where they were hidden—
The tears are on them yet.

How many souls—His loved ones—
Dwell lonely and apart,
Hiding from all but One above
The fragrance of their heart.

A Chaplet of Flowers.

Then take that virgin lily,
How holily she stands—
You know the gentle angels
Bear lilies in their hands.

Yet crowned with purer radiance
A deeper love they claim,
Because their queen-like whiteness
Is linked with Mary's name.

And now this spray of ivy :
You know its gradual clasp
Uproots strong trees, and towers
Fall crumbling in its grasp.

So God's dear grace around us
With secret patience clings,
And slow sure power, that loosens
Strong holds on human things.

Then heliotrope, that turneth
Towards her lord the sun,—
Would that our thoughts as fondly
Sought our beloved One.

Nay—if that branch be fading,
Cast not one blossom by,
Its little task is ended
And it does well to die.

And let some field flowers even
Be wreathed among the rest,
I think the infant Jesus
Would love such ones the best.

These flowers are all too brilliant,
So place calm heartsease there,
God's last and sacred treasure
For all who wait and bear.

Then lemon leaves, whose sweetness
Grows sweeter than before
When bruised, and crushed, and broken,
—Hearts need that lesson more.

Yet stay—one crowning glory,
All His, and yet all ours ;
The dearest, tenderest thought of all,
Is still the Passion flower's.

So take it now—nay, heed not
My tears that on it fall ;
I thank Him for the flowers,
As I can do for all.

And place it on the altar,
Where oft in days long flown,
I knelt by His dear mother,
And knew she was my own.


The bells ring out her praises,
The evening shades grow dim ;
Go there and say a prayer for me,
And sing Our Lady's hymn.

While I lie here, and ask her help
In that last, longed-for day—
When the Belovèd of my heart
Will call my soul away.

KYRIE ELEISON.

In joy, in pain, in sorrow,
 Father, Thy hand we see ;
But some among Thy children
 Deny this faith and Thee.
They will not ask Thy mercy,
 But we kneel for them in prayer ;
Are they not still Thy children ?
 Pity, oh God ! and spare.
Thy peace, oh Lord, has never
 On their desolate pathway shone,
Darkness is all around them :
 Kyrie Eleison !

For them, the starry heavens
 No hymn of worship raise ;



Kyrie Eleison.

For them, earth's innocent flowers
Breathe not Thy silent praise;
In heaven they know no Saviour,
No Father, and no Friend,
And life is all they hope for,
And death they call the end;
Their eyes, oh Lord ! are blinded
To the glories of the sun,
To the shining of the sea star—
Kyrie Eleison !

By the love thy saints have shown Thee,
And the sorrows they have borne,
Leave not these erring creatures
To wander thus forlorn.
By Thy tender name of Saviour,—
The name they have denied;
By Thy bitter death and passion,
And the Cross which they deride;
By the anguish Thou hast suffered,
And the glory Thou hast won;
By Thy love and by Thy pity—
Christe Eleison !

Pray for them, glorious seraphs,
And ye, bright angel band,
Who chant His praises ever,
And in His presence stand;
And thou, oh gentle Mother,
Queen of the starry sky ;
Ye Saints whose toils are over,
Join your voices to our cry—
In Thy terror or Thy mercy,
Call them ere life is done,
For His sake who died to save them,
Kyrie Eleison !

THE ANNUNCIATION.

How pure, and frail, and white,
 The snowdrops shine !
 Gather a garland bright
 For Mary's shrine.

For, born of winter snows,
 These fragile flowers
 Are gifts to our fair Queen
 From Spring's first hours.

For on this blessed day
 She knelt at prayer ;
 When, lo ! before her shone
 An Angel fair.

" Hail, Mary !" thus he cried,
 With reverent fear :
 She, with sweet wondering eyes,
 Marvelled to hear.

Be still, ye clouds of Heaven !
Be silent, Earth !
And hear an Angel tell
Of Jesus' birth.

While she, whom Gabriel hails
As full of grace,
Listens with humble faith
In her sweet face.

Be still—Pride, War, and Pomp,
Vain Hopes, vain Fears,
For now an Angel speaks,
And Mary hears.

“ Hail, Mary ! ” lo, it rings
Through ages on ;
“ Hail, Mary ! ” it shall sound,
Till Time is done.

“ Hail, Mary ! ” infant lips
Lisp it to-day ;
“ Hail, Mary ! ” with faint smile
The dying say ;

The Annunciation.

"Hail, Mary !" many a heart
Broken with grief,
In that angelic prayer,
Has found relief.

And many a half lost soul
When turned at bay,
With those triumphant words
Has won the day.

"Hail, Mary, Queen of Heaven !"
Let us repeat,
And place our snowdrop wreath
Here at her feet.

AN APPEAL.

“The Irish Church Mission for Converting the Catholics.”

SPARE her, oh cruel England !
 Thy Sister lieth low ;
 Chained and oppressed she lieth,
 Spare her that cruel blow.
 We ask not for the freedom
 Heaven has vouchsafed to thee,
 Nor bid thee share with Ireland
 The empire of the sea ;
 Her children ask no shelter—
 Leave them the stormy sky ;
 They ask not for thy harvests,
 For they know how to die :
 Deny them, if it please thee,
 A grave beneath the sod—
 But we do cry, oh England,
 Leave them their faith in God !

Take, if thou wilt, the earnings
Of the poor peasant's toil,
Take all the scanty produce
That grows on Irish soil,
To pay the alien preachers
Whom Ireland will not hear,
To pay the scoffers at a Creed
Which Irish hearts hold dear :
But leave them, cruel England,
The gift their God has given,
Leave them their ancient worship,
Leave them their faith in Heaven.

You come and offer Learning—
A mighty gift, 'tis true ;
Perchance the greatest blessing
That now is known to you—
But not to see the wonders
Sages of old beheld
Can they peril a priceless treasure,
The Faith their Fathers held ;
For in learning and in science
They may forget to pray—
God will not ask for knowledge
On the great judgment day.

When, in their wretched cabins,
 Racked by the fever pain,
And the weak cries of their children
 Who ask for food in vain ;
When starving, naked, helpless,
 From the shed that keeps them warm
Man has driven them forth to perish,
 In a less cruel storm ;
Then, then, we plead for mercy,
 Then, Sister, hear our cry !
For all we ask, oh England,
 Is—leave them there to die !
Cursed is the food and raiment
 For which a soul is sold ;
Tempt not another Judas
 To barter God for gold.
You offer food and shelter
 If they their faith deny :—
What do you gain, oh England,
 By such a shallow lie ? . . .
We will not judge the tempted,
 May God blot out their shame,
He sees the misery round them,
 He knows man's feeble frame ;
His pity still may save them,
 In His strength they must trust

Who calls us all His children,
Yet knows we are but dust.

Then leave them the kind tending
Which helped their childish years ;
Leave them the gracious comfort
Which dries the mourner's tears ;
Leave them to that great mother
In whose bosom they were born ;
Leave them the holy mysteries
That comfort the forlorn :
And, amid all their trials,
Let the Great Gift abide,
Which you, oh prosperous England,
Have dared to cast aside.
Leave them the pitying Angels,
And Mary's gentle aid,
For which earth's dearest treasures
Were not too dearly paid.
Take back your bribes, then, England,
Your gold is black and dim,
And if God sends plague and famine
They can die and go to Him.

THE JUBILEE OF 1850.

[The titles of the "Island of Saints" and the "Dower of Our Lady," though more frequently applied to Ireland, were often given to England in former times.]

BLESS God, ye happy Lands,
 For your more favoured lot :
 Our England dwells apart,
 Yet oh, forget her not.
 While, with united joy,
 This day you all adore,
 Remember what she was,
 Though her voice is heard no more.
 Pray for our desolate land,
 Left in her pride and power :
 She was the Isle of Saints,
 She was Our Lady's Dower.

Look on her ruined Altars ;
 He dwelleth there no more :
 Think what her empty churches
 Have been in times of yore ;

She knows the names no longer
Of her own sainted dead,
Denies the faith they held,
And the cause for which they bled.
Then pray for our desolate land,
Left in her pride and power :—
She was the Isle of Saints,
She was Our Lady's Dower !

Pray that her vast Cathedrals,
Deserted, empty, bare,
May once more echo accents
Of Love, and Faith, and Prayer ;
That the holy sign may bless us,
On wood, and field, and plain,
And Jesus, Mary, Joseph,
May dwell with us again.
Pray, ye more faithful nations,
In this most happy hour :—
She was the Isle of Saints,
She was Our Lady's Dower.


Beg of our Lord to give her
The gift she cast aside,
And in His mercy pardon
Her faithlessness and pride :

Pray to her Saints, who worship
Before God's mercy Throne ;
Look where our Queen is dwelling,
Ask her to claim her own,
To give her the proud titles
Lost in an evil hour—
She was the Isle of Saints,
She was Our Lady's Dower.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS.

THE Earth is so bleak and deserted,
So cold the winds blow,
That no bud or no blossom will venture
To peep from below ;
But, longing for Spring time, they nestle
Deep under the snow.

Oh, in May how we honoured Our Lady,
Her own month of flowers :
How happy we were with our garlands
Through all the spring hours !
All her shrines, in the church or the wayside,
Were made into bowers.



And in August—her glorious Assumption ;
 What feast was so bright !
What clusters of virginal lilies,
 So pure and so white !
Why the incense could scarce overpower
 Their perfume that night.

And through her dear feasts of October
 The roses bloomed still ;
Our baskets were laden with flowers,
 Her vases to fill :
Oleanders, geraniums, and myrtles,
 We chose at our will.

And we know when the Purification,
 Her first feast, comes round,
The early spring flowers, to greet it,
 Just opening are found ;
And pure, white, and spotless, the snowdrop
 Will pierce the dark ground.

And now, in this dreary December,
 Our glad hearts are fain

To see if Earth comes not to help us ;
 We seek all in vain :
Not the tiniest blossom is coming
 Till Spring breathes again.

And the bright feast of Christmas is dawning,
 And Mary is blest ;
For now she will give us her Jesus,
 Our dearest, our best,
And see where she stands—the Maid-Mother,
 Her Babe on her breast !

And not one poor garland to give her,
 And yet now, behold,
How the Kings bring their gifts—myrrh, and incense,
 And bars of pure gold :
And the Shepherds have brought for the Baby
 Some lambs from their fold.

He stretches His tiny hands towards us,
 He brings us all grace ;
And look at His Mother who holds Him—
 The smile on her face
Says they welcome the humblest gifts
 In the manger we place.


Where love takes, let love give ; and so doubt not :
 Love counts but the will,
And the heart has its flowers of devotion
 No Winter can chill,
They who cared for "good will" that first Christmas
 Will care for it still.

In the Chaplet on Jesus and Mary,
 From our hearts let us call,
At each Ave Maria we whisper
 A rosebud shall fall—
And at each Gloria Patri a Lily,
 The crown of them all !

A DESIRE.

Oh, to have dwelt in Bethlehem
When the star of the Lord shone bright !
To have sheltered the holy wanderers
On that blessed Christmas night ;
To have kissed the tender wayworn feet
Of the mother undefiled,
And with reverent wonder and deep delight,
To have tended the Holy Child !

Hush ! such a glory was not for thee ;
But that care may still be thine ;
For are there not little ones still to aid
For the sake of the Child divine ?
Are there no wandering Pilgrims now,
To thy heart and thy home to take ?
And are there no Mothers whose weary hearts
You can comfort for Mary's sake ?



Oh, to have knelt at Jesus' feet,
And have learnt His heavenly lore !
To have listened the gentle lessons He taught
On mountain, and sea, and shore !
While the rich and the mighty knew Him not,
To have meekly done His will :—
Hush ! for the worldly reject Him yet,
You can serve and love Him still.
Time cannot silence His mighty words,
And though ages have fled away,
His gentle accents of love divine
Speak to your soul to-day.

Oh, to have solaced that weeping one
Whom the righteous dared despise !
To have tenderly bound up her scattered hair,
And have dried her tearful eyes !
Hush ! there are broken hearts to soothe,
And penitent tears to dry,
While Magdalen prays for you and them,
From her home in the starry sky.

Oh, to have followed the mournful way
Of those faithful few forlorn !
And grace, beyond even an angel's hope,
The Cross for our Lord have borne.

To have shared in His tender mother's grief,
To have wept at Mary's side,
To have lived as a child in her home, and then
In her loving care have died !

Hush ! and with reverent sorrow still,
Mary's great anguish share ;
And learn, for the sake of her Son divine,
Thy cross, like His to bear.
The sorrows that weigh on thy soul unite
With those which thy Lord has borne,
And Mary will comfort thy dying hour,
Nor leave thy soul forlorn.

Oh, to have seen what we now adore,
And, though veiled to faithless sight,
To have known, in the form that Jesus wore,
The Lord of Life and Light !
Hush ! for He dwells among us still,
And a grace can yet be thine,
Which the scoffer and doubter can never know—
The Presence of the Divine.
Jesus is with His children yet,
For His word can never deceive ;
Go where His lowly Altars rise,
And worship, and believe.

OUR DAILY BREAD.

GIVE us our daily Bread,
Oh God, the bread of strength !
For we have learnt to know
How weak we are at length.
As children we are weak,
As children must be fed—
Give us Thy grace, oh Lord,
To be our daily Bread.

Give us our daily Bread :—
The bitter bread of grief.
We sought earth's poisoned feasts
For pleasure and relief ;
We sought her deadly fruits,
But now, oh God, instead,
We ask Thy healing grief
To be our daily Bread.

Our Daily Bread.

Give us our daily Bread
To cheer our fainting soul ;
The feast of comfort, Lord,
And peace, to make us whole :
For we are sick of tears,
The useless tears we shed ;—
Now give us comfort, Lord,
To be our daily Bread.

Give us our daily Bread,
The Bread of Angels, Lord,
By us, so many times,
Broken, betrayed, adored :
His Body and His Blood ;—
The feast that Jesus spread :
Give Him—our life, our all—
To be our daily Bread !

THREEFOLD.

MOTHER of grace and mercy,
Behold how burthens three
Weigh down my weary spirit,
And drive me here—to Thee.
Three gifts I place for ever
Before thy shrine :
The threefold offering of my love,
Mary, to thine !


The Past : with all its memories,
Of pain—that stings me yet ;
Of sin—that brought repentance ;
Of joy—that brought regret.
That which has been :—for ever
So bitter-sweet—
I lay in humblest offering
Before thy feet

Threefold.

The Present : that dark shadow
Through which we toil to-day ;
The slow drops of the chalice
That must not pass away.
Mother—I dare not struggle,
Still less despair :
I place my Present in thy hands
And leave it there.

The Future : holding all things
Which I can hope or fear,
Brings sin and pain, it may be,
Nearer and yet more near.
Mother ! this doubt and shrinking
Will not depart,
Unless I trust my Future
To thy dear Heart.

Making the Past my lesson,
Guiding the Present right,
Ruling the misty Future—
Bless them and me to-night.
What may be, and what must be,
And what has been,
In thy dear care for ever
I leave, my Queen !



CONFIDO ET CONQUIESCO.

" Scit ; potest ; vult : quid est quod timeamus ? "

S. IGNATIUS.

FRET not, poor soul : while doubt and fear
 Disturb thy breast,
 The pitying angels, who can see
 How vain thy wild regret must be,
 Say, Trust and Rest.

Plan not, nor scheme—but calmly wait ;
 His choice is best.
 While blind and erring is thy sight,
 His wisdom sees and judges right,
 So Trust and Rest.

Strive not, nor struggle : thy poor might
 Can never wrest
 The meanest thing to serve thy will ;
 All power is His alone : Be still,
 And Trust and Rest.

48 *Confido et Conquiesco.*

Desire not : self-love is strong
 Within thy breast ;
And yet He loves thee better still,
So let Him do His loving will,
 And Trust and Rest.

What dost thou fear ? His wisdom reigns
 Supreme confessed ;
His power is infinite ; His love
Thy deepest, fondest dreams above—
 So Trust and Rest.

ORA PRO ME.

AVE MARIA ! bright and pure,
 Hear, oh hear me when I pray !
 Pains and pleasures try the pilgrim
 On his long and weary way ;
 Fears and perils are around me,—
 Ora pro me.

Mary, see my heart is burdened,
 Take, oh take the weight away,
 Or help me, that I may not murmur
 If it is a cross you lay
 On my weak and trembling heart—bu/
 Ora pro me.

Mary, Mary, Queen of Heaven !
 Teach, oh ! teach me to obey :
 Lead me on, though fierce temptations
 Stand and meet me in the way ;
 When I fail and faint, my mother,
 Ora pro me.

Then shall I—if thou, O Mary.

Art my strong support and stay—

Fear nor feel the threefold danger

Standing forth in dread array ;

Now and ever shield and guard me,

Ora pro me.

When my eyes are slowly closing,

And I fade from earth away,

And when Death, the stern destroyer,

Claims my body as his prey—

Claim my soul and then, sweet Mary,

Ora pro me.

THE CHURCH IN 1849.

Oh, mighty Mother, hearken ! for thy foes
Gather around thee, and exulting cry
That thine old strength is gone and thou must die,
Pointing with fierce rejoicing to thy woes.
And is it so? The raging whirlwind blows
No stronger now than it has done of yore :
Rebellion, strife, and sin have been before ;
The same companions whom thy Master chose.
We too rejoice : we know thy might is more
When to the world thy glory seemeth dim ;
Nor can Hell's gates prevail to conquer Thee,
Who hearest over all the voice of Him
Who chose thy first and greatest Prince should be
A fisher on the Lake of Galilee.


FISHERS OF MEN.

THE boats are out and the storm is high,
We kneel on the shore and pray :
The Star of the Sea shines still in the sky,
And God is our help and stay.

The fishers are weak, and the tide is strong,
And their boat seems slight and frail—
But St. Peter has steered it for them so long,
It would weather a rougher gale.

St. John the Belovèd sails with them too,
And his loving words they hear ;
So with tender trust the boat's brave crew
Neither doubt, or pause, or fear.

He who sent them fishing is with them still,
And He bids them cast their net ;
And He has the power their boat to fill,
So we know He will do it yet.



They have cast their nets again and again,
And now call to us on shore ;
If our feeble prayers seem only in vain,
We will pray and pray the more.

Though the storm is loud, and our voice is drowned
By the roar of the wind and sea,
We know that more terrible tempests found
Their Ruler, O Lord, in Thee !

See, they do not pause, they are toiling on,
Yet they cast a loving glance
On the star above, and ever anon
Look up through the blue expanse.

O Mary, listen ! for danger is nigh,
And we know thou art near us then ;
For thy Son's dear servants to thee we cry,
Sent out as fishers of men.

Oh watch—as of old thou didst watch the boat
On the Galilean lake—
And grant that the fishers may keep afloat
Till the nets, o'ercharged, shall break.

THE OLD YEAR'S BLESSING.

I AM fading from you,
But one draweth near,
Called the Angel-guardian
Of the coming year.

If my gifts and graces
Coldly you forget,
Let the New Year's Angel
Bless and crown them yet.

For we work together ;
He and I are one :
Let him end and perfect
All I leave undone.

I brought Good Desires,
Though as yet but seeds ;
Let the New Year make them
Blossom into Deeds.

The Old Year's Blessing.

55

I brought Joy to brighten
Many happy days ;
Let the New Year's Angel
Turn it into Praise.

If I gave you Sickness,
If I brought you Care,
Let him make one Patience,
And the other Prayer.

Where I brought you Sorrow,
Through his care, at length,
It may rise triumphant
Into future Strength.

If I brought you Plenty,
All wealth's bounteous charms,
Shall not the New Angel
Turn them into Alms ?

I gave Health and Leisure,
Skill, to dream and plan,
Let him make them nobler ;—
Work for God and Man.

The Old Year's Blessing.

If I broke your Idols,
 Showed you they were dust,
Let him turn the Knowledge
 Into heavenly Trust.

If I brought Temptation,
 Let sin die away
Into boundless Pity
 For all hearts that stray.

If your list of Errors
 Dark and long appears,
Let this new-born Monarch
 Melt them into Tears.

May you hold this Angel
 Dearer than the last,—
So I bless his Future,
 While he crowns my Past.


EVENING CHANT.

STREW before our Lady's Picture
Roses—flushing like the sky
Where the lingering western cloudlets
Watch the daylight die.

Violets steeped in dreamy odours,
Humble as the Mother mild,
Blue as were her eyes when watching
O'er her sleeping Child.

Strew white Lilies, pure and spotless,
Bending on their stalks of green,
Bending down with tender pity—
Like our Holy Queen.

Let the flowers spend their fragrance
On our Lady's own dear shrine,
While we claim her gracious helping
Near her Son divine.



Strew before our Lady's picture
Gentle flowers, fair and sweet ;
Hope, and Fear, and Joy, and Sorrow,
Place, too, at her feet.

Hark ! the Angelus is ringing—
Ringing through the fading light,
In the heart of every Blossom
Leave a prayer to-night.

All night long will Mary listen,
While our pleadings fond and deep
On their scented breath are rising
For us—while we sleep.


Scarcely through the starry silence
Shall one trembling petal stir,
While they breathe their own sweet fragrance
And our prayers—to Her.

Peace to every heart that loves her !
All her children shall be blest :
While She prays and watches for us,
We will trust and rest.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

THE moon that now is shining
In skies so blue and bright,
Shone ages since on Shepherds
Who watched their flocks by night.
There was no sound upon the earth,
The azure air was still,
The sheep in quiet clusters lay,
Upon the grassy hill.

When lo! a white winged Angel
The watchers stood before,
And told how Christ was born on earth
For mortals to adore ;
He bade the trembling Shepherds
Listen, nor be afraid,
And told how in a manger
The glorious Child was laid.



When suddenly in the Heavens
 Appeared an Angel band—
(The while in reverent wonder
 The Syrian Shepherds stand,)
And all the bright host chanted
 Words that shall never cease—
Glory to God in the highest,
 On earth good will and peace!

The vision in the heavens
 Faded, and all was still,
And the wondering shepherds left their flocks
 To feed upon the hill :
Towards the blessed city
 Quickly their course they held,
And in a lowly stable
 Virgin and Child beheld.

Beside a humble manger
 Was the Maiden Mother mild,
And in her arms her Son divine,
 A new-born Infant, smiled.
No shade of future sorrow
 From Calvary then was cast ;
Only the glory was revealed,
 The suffering was not past.

The Eastern kings before him knelt,
And rarest offerings brought ;
The shepherds worshipped and adored
The wonders God had wrought :
They saw the crown for Israel's King,
The future's glorious part—
But all these things the Mother kept
And pondered in her heart.

Now we that Maiden Mother
The Queen of Heaven call ;
And the Child we call our Jesus,
Saviour and Judge of all,—
But the star that shone in Bethlehem
Shines still, and shall not cease,
And we listen still to the tidings
Of Glory and of Peace.

OUR TITLES.

ARE we not Nobles ? we who trace
Our pedigree so high
That God for us and for our race
Created Earth and Sky
And Light and Air and Time and Space,
To serve us and then die.

Are we not Princes ? we who stand
As heirs beside the Throne ;
We who can call the promised Land
Our Heritage, our own ;
And answer to no less command
Than God's, and His alone.

Are we not Kings ? both night and day
From early until late,
About our bed, about our way,
A guard of Angels wait ;
And so we watch and work and pray
In more than royal state.

Are we not holy? Do not start:
It is God's sacred will
To call us Temples set apart
His Holy Ghost may fill:
Our very food . . . oh, hush my Heart,
Adore IT and be still!

Are we not more? our Life shall be
Immortal and divine.
The nature Mary gave to Thee,
Dear Jesus, still is Thine;
Adoring in Thy Heart, I see
Such blood as beats in mine.

Oh God, that we can dare to fail,
And dare to say we must!
Oh God, that we can ever trail
Such banners in the dust,
Can let such starry honours pale,
And such a Blazon rust!

Shall we upon such Titles bring
The taint of sin and shame?
Shall we—the children of the King
Who hold so grand a claim
Tarnish by any meaner thing
The glory of our name?

MINISTERING ANGELS.

ANGELS of light, spread your bright wings and keep
Near me at morn :
Nor in the starry eve, nor midnight deep,
Leave me forlorn.

From all dark spirits of unholy power
Guard my weak heart.
Circle around me in each perilous hour,
And take my part.

From all foreboding thoughts and dangerous fears
Keep me secure ;
Teach me to hope, and through the bitterest tears
Still to endure.

If lonely in the road so fair and wide
My feet should stray,
Then through a rougher, safer pathway guide
Me day by day.

Should my heart faint at its unequal strife,
Oh, still be near—
Shadow the perilous sweetness of this life
With holy fear.

Then leave me not alone in this bleak world,
Where'er I roam,
And at the end, with your bright wings unfurled,
Oh, take me home !

THE SHRINES OF MARY.

THERE are many shrines of our Lady,
In different lands and climes,
Where I can remember kneeling
In old and belovèd times.

They arise now like stars before me
Through the long, long night of years ;
Some are bright with a heavenly radiance,
And others shine out through tears.

They arise too like mystical flowers,
All different, and all the same,—
As they lie in my heart like a garland
That is wreathed round Mary's name.

Thus each shrine has two consecrations ;
One all the faithful can trace,
But one is for me and me only,
Holding my soul with its grace.

I.

A shrine in a quaint old Chapel
Defaced and broken with years,
Where the pavement is worn with kneeling,
And the step with kisses and tears.

She is there in the dawn of morning,
When the day is blue and bright,
In the shadowy evening twilight,
And the silent, starry night.

Through the dim old painted window
The Hours look down, and shed
A different glory upon her,
Violet, purple and red.

And there—in that quaint old Chapel
As I stood one day alone—
Came a royal message from Mary,
That claimed my life as her own.

II.

I remember a vast Cathedral
Which holds the struggle and strife
Of a grand and powerful city,
As the heart holds the throb of a life.

Where the ebb and the flow of passion,
And sin in its rushing tide
Have dashed on that worn stone chapel,
Dashed, and broken, and died.

And above the voices of sorrow
And the tempter's clamorous din,
The voice of Mary has spoken
And conquered the pain and the sin:

For long ages and generations
Have come there to strive and to pray;
She watched and guided them living,
And does not forget them to-day.

And once, in that strange, vast City
I stood in its great stone square,
Alone in the crowd and the turmoil
Of the pitiless southern glare ;

And a grief was upon my spirit,
Which I could not cast away,
It weighed on my heart all the night-time,
And it fretted my life all day.

So then to that calm cool refuge
 I turned from the noisy street,
And I carried my burden of sorrow—
 And left it at Mary's feet.

III.

I remember a lonely chapel
 With a tender claim upon me,
It was built for the sailors only,
 And they call it the Star of the Sea.

And the murmuring chant of the Vespers
 Seems caught up by the wailing breeze,
And the throb of the organ is echoed
 By the rush of the silver seas.

And the votive hearts and the anchors
 Tell of danger and peril past ;
Of the hope deferred and the waiting,
 And the comfort that came at last.

I too, had a perilous venture,
 On a stormy and treacherous main,
And I too was pleading to Mary
 From the depths of a heart in pain.

It was not a life in peril—

Oh, God ! it was far, far more ;
And the whirlpool of Hell's temptations,
Lay between the wreck and the shore.

Thick mists hid the light of the beacon,
And the voices of warning were dumb—
So I knelt by the Altar of Mary,
And told her Her hour was come.

For she waits till Earth's aid forsakes us,
Till we know our own efforts are vain ;
And we wait, in our faithless blindness,
Till no chance but her prayers remain.

And now in that sea-side chapel
By that humble village shrine
Hangs a Heart of silver, that tells her
Of the love and the gladness of mine.

IV.

There is one far shrine I remember
In the years that are fled away,
Where the grand old mountains are guarding
The glories of night and day.

Where the earth in her rich, glad beauty
Seems made for our Lady's throne,
And the stars in their radiant clusters
Seem fit for her crown alone.

Where the balmy breezes of summer
On their odorous pinions bear
The fragrance of orange blossoms,
And the chimes of the Convent prayer.

There I used to ask for Her blessing
As each summer twilight was grey ;
There I used to kneel at her Altar
At each blue, calm dawn of day.

There in silence was Victory granted,
And the terrible strife begun,
That only with Her protection,
Could be dared, or suffered, or won.

If I love the name of that Altar,
And the thought of those days gone by,
It is only the Heart of Mary
And my own that remember why.

V.

Where long ages of toil and of sorrow,
And Poverty's weary doom,
Have clustered together so closely
That life seems shadowed with gloom,

Where crime that lurks in the darkness
And vice that glares at the day
Make the spirit of hope grow weary,
And the spirit of love decay,

Where the feet of the wretched and sinful
Have closest and oftenest trod,
Is a house, as humble as any,
Yet we call it the House of God.

It is one of our Lady's Chapels ;
And though poorer than all the rest,
Just because of the sin and the sorrow,
I think she loves it the best.

There are no rich gifts on the Altar,
The shrine is humble and bare,
Yet the poor and the sick and the tempted
Think their home and their heaven is there.

And before that humble Altar
Where Our Lady of Sorrow stands,
I knelt with a weary longing
And I laid a vow in her hands.

And I know when I enter softly
And pause at that shrine to pray,
That the fret and the strife and the burden
Will be softened and laid away.

And the Prayer and the Vow that sealed it
Have bound my soul to that shrine,
For the Mother of Sorrows remembers
Her promise, and waits for mine.

It is one long chaplet of memories
Tender and true and sweet
That gleam in the Past and the Distance
Like lamps that burn at her feet.

Like stars that will shine for ever,
For time cannot touch or stir
The graces that Mary has given
Or the trust that we give to Her.

Past griefs are perished and over,
Past joys have vanished and died,
Past loves are fled and forgotten,
Past hopes have been laid aside.

Past fears have faded in daylight,
Past sins have melted in tears—
One Love and Remembrance only
Seems alive in those dead old years.

So wherever I look in the distance,
And whenever I turn to the Past,
There is always a shrine of Mary
Each brighter still than the last.

I will ask for one grace, oh, Mother !
And will leave the rest to thy will,
From one shrine of thine to another,
Let my Life be a Pilgrimage still !

At each one, oh, Mother of Mercy !
Let still more of thy love be given,
Till I kneel at the last and brightest—
The Throne of the Queen of Heaven.

THE HOMELESS POOR.

CALM the City lay in midnight silence,
Deep on streets and roofs the snow lay white ;
Then I saw an Angel spread his pinions
Rising up to Heaven to meet the night.

In his hands he bore two crowns of lilies,
Sweet with sweetness not of earthly flowers,
But a coronal of prayers for Heaven,
He had gathered through the evening hours.

He had gathered in that mighty City
Through whose streets and pathways he had trod,
Till he wove into a winter garland
Prayers that faithful hearts had sent to God.

Though the azure midnight he was rising ;
As I watched, I saw his upward flight
Checked by a mighty Angel, whose stern challenge
Like a silver blast, rang through the night.

Then strange words upon the silence broke,
And I listened as the Angels spoke.

THE ANGEL OF PRAYERS.

“I have come from wandering through the city,
I have been to seek a garland meet
To be placed before His throne in Heaven,
To be laid at His dear Mother’s feet.

“I have been to one of England’s Havens—
To a HOME for peace and honour planned,
Where the kindly lights of joy and duty
Meet and make the glory of the land.

“There I heard the ring of children’s laughter
Hushed to eager silence ; I could see
How the father stroked their golden tresses
As they clustered closer round his knee.

“And I heard him tell, with loving honour,
How the wanderers to Bethlehem came,
And I saw each head in reverence bowing
When he named the Holy Child’s dear name.

“Then he told how houseless, homeless, friendless,
They had wandered wearily and long—
Of the manger where our Lord was cradled,
Of the Shepherds listening to our song.

“As he spoke I heard his accents falter,
And I saw each childish heart was stirred
With a loving throb of tender pity
At the sorrowful, sweet tale they heard.

“As the children sang their Christmas carol
I could see the mother’s eyes grow dim,
And she held her baby closer—feeling
Most for Mary through her love for him.

“So I gathered from that home, as flowers
All the tender, loving words I heard
Given this night to Jesus and to Mary—
Look at them, and say if I have erred.”

THE ANGEL OF DEEDS.

“In that very street, at that same hour,
In the bitter air and drifting sleet,
Crouching in a doorway was a mother,
With her children shuddering at her feet.

“She was silent—who would hear her pleading ?
Men and beasts were housed—but she must stay
Houseless in the great and pitiless city,
Till the dawning of the winter day.

“Homeless—while her fellow-men are resting
Calm and blest : their very dogs are fed,
Warm and sheltered, and their sleeping children
Safely nestled in each little bed.

“She can only draw her poor rags closer
Round her wailing baby—closer hold
One, the least and sickliest—while the others
Creep together, tired, hungry, cold.

“What are these poor flowers thou hast gathered?
Cast such fragile, worthless tokens by :
Will He prize mere words of love and honour
While His Homeless Poor are left to die ?

“He has said—his truths are all eternal—
What He said both has been and shall be—
What ye have not done to these my poor ones
Lo ! ye have not done it unto Me.”

Then I saw the Angel with the flowers
Bow his head and answer, "It is well,"
As he cast a wreath of lilies earthward,
And I saw them wither as they fell.

Once again the Angel raised his head,
Smiled and showed the other wreath and said :—

THE ANGEL OF PRAYERS.

"I have been where kneeling at the Altar,
Hushed in reverent awe, a faithful throng
Have this night adored the Holy Presence,
Worshipping with incense, prayer and song.

"Every head was bowed in loving honour,
Every heart with loving awe was thrilled ;
Earth and things of earth seemed all forgotten ;
He was there—and meaner thoughts were stilled.

"There on many souls in strait and peril
Did that gracious Benediction fall,
With the strength or peace or joy or warning,
He could give, who loved and knew them all.

“ There was silence, but all hearts were speaking :
When the deepest hush of silence fell,
On the fragrant air and breathless longing
Came the echo of one silver bell.

“ On each spirit such a flood of sweetness
Broke—as we who dwell in Heaven feel,
Then the *Adoremus in eternum*,
Jubilant and strong, rolled peal on peal.

“ They had given holy adoration
Tender words of love and praise ; all bright
With the dew of contrite tears—such blossoms
I am bearing to His throne to-night.”

THE ANGEL OF DEEDS.

“ Pause again—these flowers are fair and lovely,
Radiant in their perfume and their bloom :
But not far from where you plucked this garland
Is a squalid place in ghastly gloom.

“ There black waters in their luring silence
Under loathsome arches crawl and creep,
There the rats and vermin herd together. . . .
There God's poor ones sometimes come to sleep

“There the weary come, who through the daylight
Pace the town, and crave for work in vain ;
There they crouch in cold and rain and hunger,
Waiting for another day of pain.

“In slow darkness creeps the dismal river ;
From its depths looks up a sinful rest ;
Many a weary, baffled, hopeless wanderer
Has it drawn into its treacherous breast.

“There is near *another River* flowing,
Black with guilt, and deep as hell and sin ;
On its brink even sinners stand and shudder—
Cold and hunger goad the homeless in.

“Yet these poor ones to His heart are dearer
For their grief and peril : dear indeed
Would have been the love that sought and fed them,
Gave them warmth and shelter in their need.

“For His sake those tears and prayers are offered
Which you bear as flowers to His throne ;
Better still would be the food and shelter,
Given for Him and given to His own.

“Praise with loving deeds is dear and holy,
Words of praise will never serve instead :
Lo ! you offer music, hymn, and incense—
When *He has not where to lay His head.*”

Then once more the Angel with the Flowers
Bowed his head, and answered, “It is well,”
As he cast a wreath of lilies earthwards,
And I saw them wither as they fell.

So the Vision faded, and the Angels
Melted far into the starry sky ;
By the light upon the eastern Heaven
I could see another day was nigh.

Was it quite a dream ? oh, God ! we love Him ;
All our love, though weak, is given to Him—
Why is it our hearts have been so hardened ?
Why is it our eyes have been so dim ?

Still as for Himself the Infant Jesus
In His little ones asks food and rest—
Still as for His Mother He is pleading
Just as when He lay upon her breast.

Jesus, then, and Mary still are with us—
Night will find the Child and Mother near,
Waiting for the shelter we deny them,
While we tell them that we hold them dear.

Help us, Lord ! not these Thy poor ones only,
They are with us always, and shall be :—
Help the blindness of our hearts, and teach us,
In Thy homeless ones to succour Thee.

MILLY'S EXPIATION.


THE PRIEST'S STORY.

I.

THERE are times when all these terrors
Seem to fade, and fade away,
Like a nightmare's ghastly presence
In the truthful dawn of day.
There are times, too, when before me
They arise, and seem to hold
In their grasp my very being
With the deadly strength of old,
Till my spirit quails within me,
And my very heart grows cold.

II.

For I watched when Cold and Hunger,
Like wild-beasts that sought for prey,
With a savage glare crept onward
Until men were turned at bay.



You have never seen those hunters,
Who have never known that fear,
When life costs a crust, and costing
Even that is still too dear:
But, you know, I lived in Ireland
In the fatal famine year.

III.

Yes, those days are now forgotten ;
God be thanked ! men can forget ;
Time's great gift can heal the fevers
Called Remembrance and Regret.
Man despises such forgetting ;
But I think the Angels know,
Since each hour brings new burdens,
We must let the old ones go—
Very weak, or very noble,
Are the few who cling to woe.

IV.

As a child, I lived in Connaught,
And from dawn till set of sun
Played with all the peasant-children,
So I knew them every one.


There was not a cabin near us,
But I had my welcome there ;
Though of money-help in those days
We had none ourselves to spare,
Yet the neighbours had no trouble
That I did not know and share.

v.

Oh, that great estate! the Landlord
Was abroad, a good man too ;
And the agent was not cruel,
But he had hard things to do.
As a child I saw great suffering,
Which I could not understand,
So I went back as a man there
With redress and helping planned ;
But I found, on reaching Connaught,
There was famine in the land.

vi.

Well, I worked, I toiled, I laboured ;
So, thank God, did many more ;
But I had a special pity
For the place I knew before.



It was changed ; the old were vanished ;
Those who had been workers there
Were grown old now ; and the children,
With their sunny eyes and hair,
Were a ragged army, fighting
Hand to hand with black despair.

VII.

There were some I sought out, longing
For the old familiar face,
For the hearty Irish welcome
To the well-known corner place ;
So I saw them, and I found it.
But of all whom I had known,
I cared most to see the Connors :
Their poor cabin stood alone
In the deep heart of the valley,
By the old gray fairy stone.

VIII.

They were decent people, holding,
Though no richer than the rest,
Still a place beyond their neighbours,
With a tacit, unconfessed

Pride—it may have been—that held them
From complaint when things went ill :
I might guess when work was slacker,
But no shadow seemed to chill
The warm welcome which they offered ;
It was warm and cheerful still.

IX.

Yet their home was changed : the father
And the mother were no more ;
And the brothers, Phil and Patrick,
Kept starvation from the door.
There were many little faces
Gathered round the old hearthstone ;
But the children I had played with
Were the men and women grown ;
Phil and Patrick, Kate and Milly,
Were the ones whom I had known.

X.

Kate was grown, but little altered,
Just the sunburnt, rosy face,
With its merry smile, whose shining
Seemed to light the darkest place.

But all, young and old, held Milly
As their dearest and their best,
From the baby orphan-sisters
Whom she hushed upon her breast—
She it was who bore the burdens,
Love and sorrow, for the rest.

XI.

Yes, I knew the tall slight figure,
And the face so pale and fair,
Crowned with long, long plaited tresses
Of her shining yellow hair ;
She was very calm and tender,
Warm and brave, yet just and wise,
Meeting grief with tender pity,
Sin with sorrowful surprise :
I have fancied Angels watch us
With such sad and loving eyes.

XII.

Well, I questioned past and future,
Heard of plans and hopes and fears ;
How all prospects grew still darker
With the shade of coming years.

Milly still deferred her marriage ;
But the brothers urged of late
She would leave them and old Ireland,
And at least secure her fate ;
Michael pleaded too—but vainly ;
Milly chose to wait and wait.

XIII.

Though all liked her cousin Michael—
He was steady, a good son—
Yet we wondered at the treasure
Which his careless heart had won.
Ah, he was not worth her ! Milly
Must have guessed our thought in part,
For she feigned such special deference
For his judgment and his heart :
The defiance and the answer
Of instinctive woman's art.

XIV.

But my duties would not let me
Stay in one place ; I must go
Where the want and need were greatest ;
So I travelled to and fro.


And I could not give the bounty
Which was meant for all to share,
Save in scanty portions, counting
What each hamlet had to bear ;
So my old home and old comrades
Had to struggle with despair.

XV.

I could note at every visit
How all suffered more and more ;
How the rich were growing poorer,
The poor, poorer than before.
And each time that I returned there,
I could see the famine spread ;
Till I heard of each fresh horror,
Each new tale of fear and dread,
With more pity for the living,
More rejoicing for the dead.

XVI.

Yet through all the bitter trials
Of that long and fearful time,
Still the suffering came untended
By its hideous sister, Crime.



Earthly things seemed grown less potent,
Fellow-sufferers grown more dear,
Murmurs even hushed in silence,
Just as if, in listening fear,
While God spoke so loud in sorrow,
They all felt He must be near.

XVII.

But one day—I well remember
How the warm soft autumn breeze,
And the gladness of the sunshine,
And the calmness of the seas,
Seemed in strange unnatural contrast
To the tale of woe and dread
Which I heard with painful wonder—
That the agent—I have said
That he was not harsh or cruel—
Had been shot at, and was dead.

XVIII.

For I felt in that small hamlet
More or less I knew them all,
And on some I cared for, surely,
Must this bitter vengeance fall ;

But I little dreamed how bitter,
And the grief how great and wide,
Till I heard that Michael Connor
Was accused, and would be tried
For this base and bloody murder ;
Then I cried out that they lied !

XIX.

He, who might be weak and reckless,
Yet was gentle and humane ;
He who scarcely had the courage
To inflict a needful pain—
Why, it could not be ! And Milly,
With her honest, noble pride,
And her faith and love, God help her !
It were better she had died.
So I thought, and thought, and pondered,
Till I knew they must have lied.

XX.

There was want and death and hunger
Near me then ; but this great crime
Seemed to haunt me with its terror,
And grow worse and worse with time,

Till I could not bear it longer,
And I turned my steps once more
To the hamlet ; did not slacken
Till I reached the cabin-door :
Then I paused ; I never dreaded
The kind welcome there before.

XXI.

So I entered. Kate was sitting
By the empty hearth ; around
Were the children, ragged, hungry,
Crouching silent on the ground.
But a wail of grief and sorrow
Rose, and Katie hid her face,
Sobbing out she had no welcome,
For a curse was on the place,
And their honest name was covered
With another's black disgrace.

XXII.

Then I soothed her ; asked for Milly ;
And was told she was away ;
Gone as witness to the trial,
And the trial was that day.

But all knew, so Katie told me,
 Hope or comfort there was none ;
They were sure to find him guilty,
 And before to-morrow's sun
He must die. I dared not loiter,
 For the trial had begun.

XXIII.

Yet I asked how Milly bore it ;
 And Kate told me some strange gleam
Of wild hope seemed living in her,
 But all knew it was a dream.
Then I mounted ; rode on faster,
 Faster still ; the way was long ;
Hope and anger, fear and pity,
 Each by turns were loud and strong,
And above all, infinite pity
 For the sorrow and the wrong.

XXIV.

So I rode and rode, and entered
 On the crowded market-place.
There was wonder, too, and pity
 Upon many a hungry face ;

Rise, and answer as they called her;
Rise before them all, and stand
With no quiver in her accent,
And no trembling in her hand,
Just a flush upon her forehead
Like a burning crimson brand.

XXVII.

Slowly, steadily, and calmly,
Then the awful words were said,
Calling God in Heaven to witness
To the truth of what she said.
As the oath in solemn order
On the reverent silence broke,
Some strange terror and misgiving
With a sudden start awoke:
What fear was it seized upon me
As I heard the words she spoke?

XXVIII.

As she stood there, looking onward,
Onward, neither left nor right,
Did she see some deadly purpose
Buried, hidden out of sight?

Did she see a blighting shadow
From the cloudy future cast?
Or reluctant fading from her
Right and honour,—fading fast
All her youth's remembered lessons,
All the honest, noble past?

XXIX.

But her accents never faltered,
As she swore the day and time,
At the hour of the murder,
At the moment of the crime,
She had spoken with the prisoner....
Then a gasping joyful sigh
Ran through all the court; they knew it—
Now the prisoner would not die....
And I knew that God in Heaven
Had been witness to a lie!

XXX.

Then I turned and looked at Michael;
Saw a rush of wonder stir
Through his soul; perplexed, bewildered,
He looked strangely up at her.

Would he speak ? could he have courage ?
Where she fell, could he be strong ?
Where she sinned, and sinned to save him.
Could he thrust away the wrong ?
That one moment's strange revulsion
Seemed to me an hour long.

XXXI.

And I saw the sudden shrinking
In her brothers ; wondering scorn
In the glance they cast upon her
Showed they knew she was forsworn.
They were stern, by want made sterner ;
But the spot where Milly came
In their hearts was soft and tender
For her dear and honoured name :
Now the very love was hardened,
And the honour turned to shame.

XXXII.

So I left the place, nor lingered
To see Michael, or to feign
Joy where joy was mixed so strangely
Both with pity and with pain.

Many weeks I toiled and laboured
Far from there, but night and day
One sad memory dwelt beside me,
On my heart one shadow lay ;—
Light was faded, glory tarnished,
And a soul was cast away.

* * * *

XXXIII.

It was evening ; and the sunset
Glowed and glittered on the seas,
When a great ship heaved its anchor,
Loosed its sails to meet the breeze,
Sailing, sailing to the westward.
Eyes were wet and hearts were sore ;
Many a heart that left its country,
Many a heart upon the shore,
Knew that parting was for ever,
Said farewell for evermore.

XXXIV.

In that sad and silent evening,
On the sunny quiet beach,
Lingered little groups of watchers,
But with hearts too full for speech.

As I passed, I knew so many,
That my heart ached too that night,
For the yearning love, that gazing,
Strained to see the last faint sight
Of the great ship, sailing westward,
Down the track of evening light.

XXXV.

None were lonely though, one sorrow
Drew that evening heart to heart ;
Only far from all the others
One lone woman stood apart.
There was something in the figure,
Tall and slender, standing there,
That I knew—yet no, I doubted—
That forlorn and helpless air ;
When a gleam of sunset glory
Showed her yellow braided hair.

XXXVI.

It was Milly : ere I sought her,
One who knew her, standing by,
Said, "Her people sailed from Ireland,
And she stayed, but none knew why.

They were strong ; in that far country
Work such men were sure to find ;
They had offered to take Milly,
Pressed her often, and been kind ;
They had taken the young children,
Only she was left behind.

XXXVII.

“Michael, too, was with them : doubly
Had his fame been cleared by time ;
For the murderer, lately dying,
Had confessed and owned the crime :
And yet Milly, none knew wherefore,
Broke her plighted troth to him ;
Parted, too, with all her loved ones
For some strange and selfish whim.”...
Oh, my heart was sore for Milly,
And I felt my eyes grow dim.

XXXVIII.

She is still in Ireland ; dwelling
Near the old place, and alone ;
Just the same kind loving spirit,
But the old light heart is flown.

When the humble toil is over
For her scanty daily bread,
Then she turns to nurse the suffering,
Or to pray beside the dead :
Many, many thankful blessings
Fall each day upon her head.

XXXIX.

There is no distress or sorrow
Milly does not try to cheer ;
There is never fever raging
But you always find her near :
And she knows—at least I think so,
That I guess her secret pain,
Why her Love and why her Sorrow
Need be purified from stain,
Need in special consecration
Be restored to God again.

A CASTLE IN THE AIR.

I BUILT myself a castle,
So noble, grand and fair ;
I built myself a castle,
A castle—in the air.

The fancies of my twilights
That fade in sober truth,
The longing of my sorrow,
And the vision of my youth ;

The plans of joyful futures ;
So dear they used to seem ;
The prayer that rose unbidden,
Half prayer—and half a dream ;

The hopes that died unuttered
Within this heart of mine ;—
For all these tender treasures
My castle was the shrine.

I looked at all the castles
That rise to grace the land,
But I never saw another,
So stately or so grand.

And now you see it shattered,
My castle in the air ;
It lies, a dreary ruin,
All desolate and bare.

I cannot build another,
I saw that one decay ;
And strength and heart and courage
Died out the self-same day.

Yet still, beside that ruin,
With hopes as deep and fond,
I wait with an infinite longing,
Only—I look beyond.

PER PACEM AD LUCEM.

I do not ask, Oh Lord, that life may be
 A pleasant road ;
 I do not ask that Thou wouldst take from me
 Aught of its load ;

I do not ask that flowers should always spring
 Beneath my feet ;
 I know too well the poison and the sting
 Of things too sweet.

For one thing, only Lord, dear Lord, I plead,
 Lead me aright—
 Though strength should falter, and though heart
 should bleed—
 Through Peace to Light.

I do not ask, Oh Lord, that thou shouldst shed
 Full radiance here ;
 Give but a ray of peace, that I may tread
 Without a fear.

I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see—
Better in darkness just to feel Thy hand
And follow Thee.

Joy is like restless day ; but peace divine
Like quiet night :
Lead me Oh Lord—till perfect Day shall shine,
Through Peace to Light.

A LEGEND.

I.


THE Monk was preaching : strong his earnest word,
From the abundance of his heart he spoke,
And the flame spread—in every soul that heard
Sorrow and love and good resolve awoke :—
The poor lay Brother, ignorant and old,
Thanked God that he had heard such words of gold.

II.

“Still let the glory Lord be thine alone,”
So prayed the Monk ; his heart absorbed in praise:
“Thine be the glory : if my hands have sown
The harvest ripened in Thy mercy’s rays,
It was Thy Blessing Lord that made my word,
Bring light and love to every soul that heard.

III.

“Oh Lord I thank Thee that my feeble strength
Has been so blest ; that sinful hearts and cold
Were melted at my pleading—knew at length
How sweet Thy service and how safe Thy fold :
While souls that loved Thee saw before them rise
Still holier heights of loving sacrifice.”



IV.

So prayed the Monk : when suddenly he heard
An Angel speaking thus—"Know, oh my Son,
Thy words had all been vain, but hearts were stirred,
And Saints were edified and sinners won
By his, the poor lay Brother's, humble aid
Who sat upon the Pulpit stair and prayed."

BIRTHDAY GIFTS.

(FOR A CHILD.)

I.

WHY do you look sad my Minnie ?
 Tell me darling—for to-day
 Is the birthday of Our Lady,
 And Her children should be gay.

II.

What ?—You say that all the others,
 Alice, Cyril, Effie, Paul,
 All had got a gift to give Her,
 Only you had none at all.

III.

Well dear, that does seem a pity :
 Tell me how it came about
 That the others bring a present,
 And my Minnie comes without.

IV.

Alice has a lovely Banner
All embroidered blue and gold :—
Then you know that Sister Alice
Is so clever and so old.

V.

Cyril has his two camelias ;
One deep red, and one pure white :
They will stand at Benediction
On the Altar steps to-night.

VI.

Effie, steady little Effie,
Stitching many an hour away,
She has clothed a little orphan
All in honour of to-day.

VII.

With the skill the good Nuns taught her
Angela herself has made
Two tall stems of such real lilies,
They do all but smell—and fade.

VIII.

Then with look of grave importance
Comes our quiet little Paul
With the myrtle from his garden :—
He himself is not as tall.

IX.

Even Baby Agnes, kneeling
With half shy, half solemn air,
Held up one sweet rose to Mary,
Lisping out her tiny prayer.

X.

Well my Minnie—say—how was it?
Shall I guess? I think I know
All the griefs. Well, I will count them—
First your rose-tree would not blow;

XI.

Then the fines have been so many
All the pennies melt away;
Then for work—I know my Minnie
Cares so very much for play,

XII.

That these little clumsy fingers
Scarcely yet have learnt to sew,
Still less all the skilful fancies
Angela and Alice know.

XIII.

Yet my Minnie can't be treated
Quite as Baby was to-day,
When Mamma or Alice gave her
Something just to give away.

XIV.

Well my darling, there are many
Who have neither time nor skill,
Gold nor silver, yet they offer
Gifts to Mary if they will.

XV.

There are ways—our Lady knows them,
And Her children all should know
How to find a flower for Mary
Underneath the deepest snow ;

XVI.

How to make a lovely garland,
Winter though it be and cold ;
How to buy the rarest offering,
Costing—something—but not gold ;

XVII.

How to buy, and buy it dearly
Gifts that She will love to take ;
Nor to grudge the cost, but give it
Cheerfully for Mary's sake.

XVIII.

Does that seem so strange my Darling ?
Nay dear, it is nothing new ;
All can give Her noble presents—
Shall I tell you of a few ?

XIX.

What were those the Magi offered
Frankincense and gold and myrrh :—
Minnie thinks that Saints and Monarchs
Are quite different from her !

XX.

... Sometimes it is hard to listen
To a word unkind or cold
And to smile a loving answer :
Do it—and you give Her gold.

XXI.

Thoughts of Her in work or playtime—
Those small grains of incense rare,
Cast upon a burning censer,
Rise in perfumed clouds of prayer.

XXII.

There are sometimes bitter fancies,
Little murmurs that will stir
Even a loving heart :—but crush them
And you give Our Lady myrrh.

XXIII.

Give your little crosses to her,
Which each day, each hour befall,
They remind Her of Her Jesus,
So she loves them best of all.

XXIV.

Some seem very poor and worthless,
Yet however small and slight,
Given to her by one who loves her
They are precious in her sight.

XXV.

One may be so hard to carry
That your hands will bleed and smart :—
Go and take it to Her Altar,
Go and place it in her heart ;

XXVI.

Check your tears and try to love it,
Love it as His sacred will—
So you set the cross with jewels,
Make your gift more precious still.

XXVII.

There are souls—alas ! too many
Who forget that Jesus died,
Who forget that sin for ever
Is the lance to pierce His side. .

XXVIII.

Hearts that turn away from Jesus;
Sins that scourge Him and betray;
Cold and cruel souls that even
Crucify Him day by day.

XXIX.

Ah! poor sinners! Mary loves them,
And she knows no royal gem
Half so noble or so precious
As the prayer you say for them;

XXX.

Or resign some little pleasure,
Give it her instead, to win
Help for some poor soul in peril,
Grace for some poor heart in sin

XXXI.

Mercy for poor sinners—pleading
For their souls as for your own—
So you make a crown of jewels
Fit to lay before Her throne.

XXXII.

Flowers—why I should never finish
If I tried to count them too—
If I told you how to know them,
In what garden-plot they grew.

XXXIII.


Yet I think my darling guesses
They are emblems and we trace
In the rarest and the loveliest
Acts of love and gifts of grace.

XXXIV.

Modest violets—meek snowdrops,
Holy lilies white and pure,
Faithful tendrils—herbs for healing—
If they only would endure!

XXXV.

And they will—such flowers fade not;
They are not of mortal birth—
And such garlands given to Mary
Die not like the gifts of Earth.



XXXVI.

Well my Minnie—can you tell me
You have still no gift to lay
At the feet of your dear Mother,
Any hour, any day ?

XXXVII.

Give Her now—to-day—for ever,
One great gift—the first, the best—
Give your heart to Her, and ask her
How to give her all the rest.

A BEGGAR.

I BEG of you, I beg of you, my brothers,
 For my need is very sore ;
 Not for gold and not for silver do I ask you,
 But for something even more :
 From the depths of your hearts pity let it be—
 Pray for me.

I beg of you whose robes of radiant whiteness
 Have been kept without a stain ;
 Of you who, stung to death by serpent Pleasure,
 Found the healing Angel Pain :
 Whether holy or forgiven you may be—
 Pray for me.

I beg of you calm souls whose wondering pity
 Looks at paths you never trod :
 I beg of you who suffer—for all sorrow
 Must be very near to God—
 And the need is even greater than you see—
 Pray for me.



I beg of you oh children, for He loves you,
And He loves your prayers the best :
Fold your little hands together, and ask Jesus
That the weary may have rest,
That a bird caught in a net may be set free—
Pray for me.

I beg of you who stand before the Altar,
Whose anointed hands upraise
All the sin and all the sorrow of the Ages,
All the love and all the praise,
And the glory which was always and shall be—
Pray for me.

I beg of you—of you who through Life's battle
Our dear Lord has set apart,
That while we who love the peril are made captives,
Still the Church may have its Heart
Which is fettered that our souls may be set free—
Pray for me.

I beg of you, I beg of you my brothers,
For an alms this very day ;
I am standing on your doorstep as a Beggar
Who will not be turned away,
And the Charity you give my soul shall be—
Pray for me !

LINKS WITH HEAVEN.

OUR God in Heaven, from that holy place,
 To each of us an Angel guide has given ;
 But Mothers of dead children have more grace—
 For they give Angels to their God and Heaven.

How can a Mother's heart feel cold or weary
 Knowing her dearer self safe, happy, warm ?
 How can she feel her road too dark or dreary
 Who knows her treasure sheltered from the storm.

How can she sin ? Our hearts may be unheeding—
 Our God forgot—our holy Saints defied—
 But can a mother hear her dead child pleading
 And thrust those little angel hands aside ?

Those little hands stretched down to draw her ever
 Nearer to God by mother love :—we all
 Are blind and weak—yet surely She can never,
 With such a stake in Heaven, fail or fall.

She knows that when the mighty Angels raise
Chorus in Heaven, one little silver tone
Is hers for ever—that one little praise,
One little happy voice is all her own.

We may not see her sacred crown of honour,
But all the Angels flitting to and fro
Pause smiling as they pass—they look upon her
As mother of an angel whom they know,

One whom they left nestled at Mary's feet—
The children's place in Heaven—who softly sings
A little chant to please them, slow and sweet,
Or smiling strokes their little folded wings.

Or gives them Her white lilies or Her beads
To play with :—yet, in spite of flower or song
They often lift a wistful look that pleads
And asks Her why their mother stays so long.

Then our dear Queen makes answer she will call
Her very soon : meanwhile they are beguiled
To wait and listen while She tells them all
A story of Her Jesus as a child.

Ah, Saints in Heaven may pray with earnest will
And pity for their weak and erring brothers :
Yet there is prayer in Heaven more tender still—
The little Children pleading for their Mothers.

HOMELESS.

It is cold dark midnight, yet listen
To that patter of tiny feet !
Is it one of your dogs, fair lady,
Who whines in the bleak cold street ?—
Is it one of your silken spaniels
Shut out in the snow and the sleet ?

My dogs sleep warm in their baskets,
Safe from the darkness and snow ;
All the beasts in our Christian England,
Find pity wherever they go—
(Those are only the homeless children
Who are wandering to and fro.)

Look out in the gusty darkness—
I have seen it again and again,
That shadow, that flits so slowly
Up and down past the window pane :—
It is surely some criminal lurking
Out there in the frozen rain ?

Nay, our Criminals all are sheltered,
They are pitied and taught and fed :
That is only a sister-woman
Who has got neither food nor bed—
And the Night cries 'sin to be living,'
And the River cries 'sin to be dead.'

Look out at that farthest corner
Where the wall stands blank and bare :—
Can that be a pack which a Pedlar
Has left and forgotten there ?
His goods lying out unsheltered
Will be spoilt by the damp night air.

Nay ;—goods in our thrifty England
Are not left to lie and grow rotten,
For each man knows the market value
Of silk or woollen or cotton...
But in counting the riches of England
I think our Poor are forgotten.

Our Beasts and our Thieves and our Chattels
Have weight for good or for ill ;
But the Poor are only His image,
His presence, His word, His will—
And so Lazarus lies at our doorstep
And Dives neglects him still.

